

Veterans Affairs. Testimony in support of its passage was received from the American Legion Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, Paralyzed Veterans of America and the Vietnam Veterans of America.

#### DISABLED VETERANS

IT Accessibility for Visually Impaired Veterans—In February, 2015, I pushed the VA Secretary to ensure the agency is compliant with laws requiring VA website accessibility for disabled veterans, particularly for visually impaired veterans, and received the George “Buck” Gillispie Award from the Blinded American Veterans Foundation in June, 2016.

Caregivers—In 2010, the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act (P.L. 111-163) was enacted to provide comprehensive caregiver support to caregivers of veterans severely injured or disabled after September 11, 2001. I strongly advocated for the enactment of the original program. In the six years since, I have spoken with many caregivers in my district who have benefited from the program, but also heard from caregivers who have given up careers to provide unpaid care for veterans suffering from illness rather than injuries, or who were injured or became ill before 9/11. I strongly favor expanding this highly successful program to provide support for them by cosponsoring H.R. 1969, the Military and Veteran Caregiver Services Improvement Act. The bill has been referred to the Veterans Committee and several other committees continue to push for hearings and has advocated about the need to find the necessary funding by closing tax loopholes and not cutting other VA programs.

#### HONORING AND MEMORIALIZING VETERANS AND SURVIVING SPOUSES

I sponsored H.R. 3715, the Final Farewell Act of 2016. It provides for Saturday burials for any eligible veteran or spouse at any of the nation's 134 National Veterans' Cemeteries in light of the preference in certain communities and cultures in the US who, by tradition, hold burial services on Saturdays. This makes it possible for family members to be comforted when they need it most. H.R. 3715 passed the House by voice vote on May 23, 2016.

Introduced H.R. 5059 the Love Lives On Act of 2016, April 26, 2016, which allows spouses to continue to receive survival benefits should they remarry, which has been, referred to Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs. I am working with Veteran Service Organizations such as the Gold Star Wives of America and Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) to garner the support and find the funding offsets needed to make this bill a priority and move it forward.

I took the lead in the effort by Members of Congress on the House side for the inclusion in H.R. 4909, the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) and H.R. 4974, the 2017 Military Construction Appropriations and Veterans Affairs Act of \$5 Million (through the Department of Defense) to support the Women in Military Service to America Memorial (WIMSA) at Arlington Cemetery. WIMSA recognizes and honors the service of women in the military throughout the country's history. The 2017 funding is primarily for maintenance and renovation of the Memorial's building, which is in serious disrepair. Funding for the WIMSA's educational programs and exhibitions come from private fundraising. These efforts were successful. H.R. 4909 passed the House on May 26 and is awaiting action in the Senate. H.R. 4974, passed the House on May 19 and the House-Senate Conference Report passed the House June 22.

#### COMMENDING THE WASHINGTON REGIONAL ALCOHOL PROGRAM AND THE KICKOFF OF SOBERRIDE

#### HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2016

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP) and to congratulate the recipients of the Law Enforcement Awards for Excellence.

Founded in 1982, WRAP is an award-winning, public-private coalition formed to fight drunk driving, drugged driving, and underage drinking in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan region. Through educational and innovative public outreach programs, WRAP is credited with keeping local alcohol-related death rates consistently below the national average. Its programs educate students and the general public on the dangers of alcohol and drugs, particularly driving while under the influence. Through the WRAP Holiday SoberRide program, individuals who are impaired can request a free cab ride home. Since SoberRide was launched in 1993, 65,385 free cab rides have been provided in the Washington Metropolitan area, preventing potential accidents and deaths.

In 1982, the year that WRAP was founded, 26,173 people in the United States lost their lives in alcohol-related car accidents, and 60 percent of all traffic fatalities involved drunk driving. Due to the tireless efforts of WRAP, other organizations such as MADD and SADD, local and state police, and enforcement of more stringent anti-drunk driving laws, considerable progress has been made in decreasing the number of alcohol-related traffic fatalities, yet more still must be done. In 2015, 10,265 people died in the United States in alcohol-related crashes which represents 29 percent of all traffic fatalities. Sadly, this is a 3.2 percent increase over the 2014 fatalities which totaled 9,967.

Since 1997, WRAP has sponsored an annual Law Enforcement Awards Ceremony to honor local law enforcement professionals who have gone above and beyond the call of duty in the fight against drunk driving. It is my honor to include the following names of the Law Enforcement Awards of Excellence for Impaired Driving Prevention recipients:

Officer Wesley Vitale, City of Alexandria Police Department;

Officer John Clark, Arlington County Police Department;

PFC Kevin Hedden, City of Falls Church Police Department;

Second Lieutenant Jason Long, Fairfax County Police Department;

Private First Class Eliezer Calo, Herndon Police Department;

Deputy Jason Totaro, Loudoun County Sheriff's Office;

Trooper First Class Anthony Wallace, Maryland State Police;

Officer David Naples, Metropolitan Police Department;

Police Officer III John P. Romack, Montgomery County Department of Police;

Police Officer III Alex Latifov, Montgomery County Department of Police;

Corporal Sage Saliba, Prince George's County Police Department;

Officer Jeremy A. Schenck, Prince William County Police Department;

Officer Benjamin Tomasiello, United States Park Police;

Trooper Zachary Koon, Virginia State Police.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating the recipients of the Law Enforcement Awards of Excellence and in recognizing WRAP for its 34 years of public service. I commend the staff of WRAP under the leadership of President Kurt Erickson for their tireless dedication to eradicating underage drinking and drunk or drugged driving. Their efforts combined with the support of partner organizations and law enforcement agencies have truly saved lives and are deserving of our highest praise and gratitude.

#### IN RECOGNITION OF ISRAEL'S 68TH INDEPENDENCE DAY

#### HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2016

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate Israel's 68th Independence Day commemorating the day before the expiration of the British Mandate in 1948, when Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion declared the establishment of Israel as the sovereign state of the Jewish people. I am pleased to celebrate that defining moment, as well as Israel's remarkable growth and success.

When the United Nations issued Resolution 181 on November 29, 1947, approving the Special Committee on Palestine's partition plan establishing a Jewish and an Arab state, it seemed to be the culmination of decades of hard work and bold dreams. On May 14, 1948 (5 Iyar), as the British Mandate was coming to an end, David Ben-Gurion held a special ceremony at the Tel Aviv Museum and read the Declaration of Independence (Megilat HaAtzma'ut), announcing the establishment of a Jewish nation to be known as Israel. The members of the Provisional State Council joined him in signing the document. America recognized Israel just after midnight on May 15, moments after the new nation was proclaimed.

Since that day the relationship between the United States and Israel has strengthened and flourished. Israel remains a beacon of hope and justice in an otherwise tumultuous region. Democracy, freedom of expression, an independent judiciary and government by the rule of law are among the ideals shared by our two nations. As a result of our common outlook, the bonds of friendship between our two nations are strong and unbreakable.

Like the United States, Israel is a nation of immigrants and draws its strength from the diversity and tenacity of its people. Israel has been a haven for Jews from every part of the globe, particularly those fleeing discrimination and expulsion. Israel has succeeded in integrating diverse populations and making them part of Israeli culture.

By investing in its citizens, Israel has proven that a creative and resourceful population can overcome a lack of natural resources. Lacking potable water, Israel is at the forefront of desalination efforts. Lacking arable land, it has